

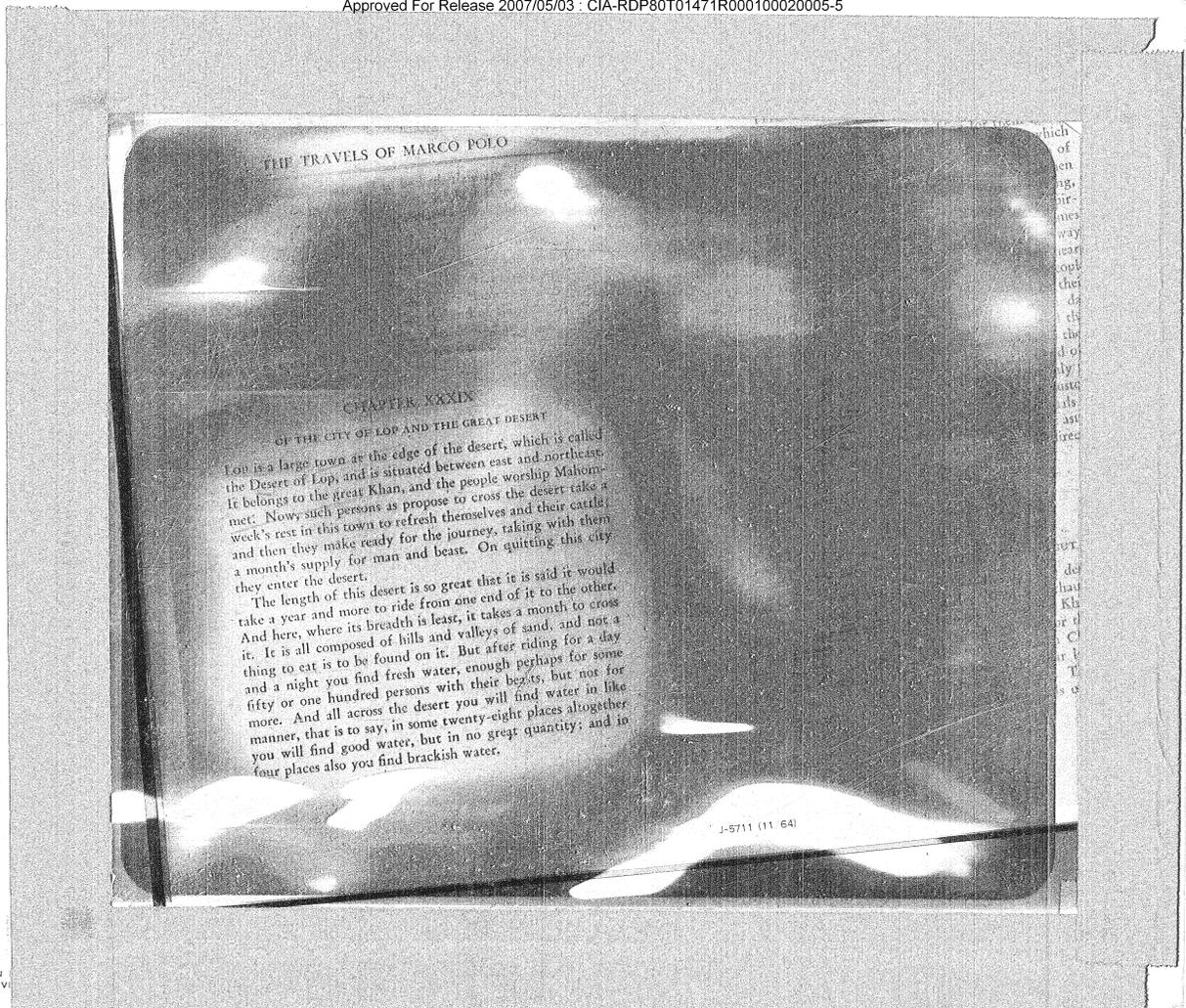
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THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO

CHAPTER XXXIX

OF THE CITY OF LOP AND THE GREAT DESERT

Lop is a large town at the edge of the desert, which is called the Desert of Lops and is situated between east and northeast. It belongs to the great Khan, and the people worship Mahomet. Now, such persons as propose to cross the desert take a week's rest in this town to refresh themselves and their cattle, and then they make ready for the journey, taking with them a month's supply for man and beast. On quitting this city they enter the desert.

The length of this desert is so great that it is said it would take a year and more to ride from one end of it to the other. And here, where its breadth is least, it takes a month to cross it. It is all composed of hills and valleys of sand, and not a thing to eat is to be found on it. But after riding for a day and a night you find fresh water, enough perhaps for some fifty or one hundred persons with their beasts, but not for more. And all across the desert you will find water in like manner, that is to say, in some twenty-eight places altogether you will find good water, but in no great quantity; and in four places also you find brackish water.

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